



Brussels  
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**12TH MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CHILD GUARANTEE COORDINATORS  
21 SEPTEMBER 2023 (ONLINE)**

**MINUTES**

On 21 September 2023, the Commission held the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Child Guarantee Coordinators, attended online by representatives of 24 Member States.

**I. Opening remarks**

The Director for Social Rights and Inclusion **Ms Katarina IVANKOVIC-KNEZEVIC** updated Child Guarantee Coordinators about recent developments:

- departures and nominations of several national Coordinators;
- submission of the German action plan;
- Eurostat flash estimates of the 2022 data indicating that the number of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion increased since 2021 by 323 thousand children across the EU, equal to 0.3 percentage point;
- discussion of the monitoring framework for European Child Guarantee in the Indicators Sub-Group of Social Protection Committee on 18.09, with the aim to finalise it by end of year;
- publication of the European Social Policy Analysis Network reports on Access for children in need to the key services covered by the European Child Guarantee on DG EMPL website - there is a national report for each Member State;
- meeting of the European Parliament's Working Group on the European Child Guarantee on 20 September, where progress with implementation, as well as the possible options for monitoring, were discussed.

**II. Information on the activities of Spanish Presidency of EU Council**

**Ms Lucia LOSOVIZ ADANI** mentioned various events organised by the Spanish Presidency and linked to child rights and family policies, including child participation event (on 29 September – 1 October). An advisory group made of children was formed to pick the topics, opting to discuss mental health, participation, protection and education. A declaration on fighting child poverty was circulated among the Member States with request to sign it still before the event. On 3 November a meeting of ECG coordinators is planned in Valencia, with a participatory approach, where different sessions and discussions are planned. Eurochild and other representatives of the civil society will participate in some of the sessions.

**III. Updates from the Member States (*tour de table*)**

**Ms Sofie DUMORTIER**, informed that **Belgium** is hosting several thematic seminars with regional and local stakeholders on some of the topics covered by the ECG Recommendation. The aim is to increase awareness and ownership of the child guarantee. The seminars also support preparing the reporting and upcoming Council Presidency. A Presidency event on child guarantee is planned for 2 and 3 May 2024.

**Ms Natalia EFREMOVA**, informed that she has been reconfirmed in the post of Child Guarantee Coordinator for **Bulgaria**. The Bulgarian action plan has been split into smaller operational plans. The draft of the first operational plan for 2023-24 has been finalised, with a detailed list of measures. Calls under two operational programmes of ESF+ have been launched, with 45 projects already approved for financing. Work is ongoing in the expert group, including different stakeholders.

**Ms Kamila VLČKOVÁ**, mentioned that **Czechia** started working on the implementation report. The membership of the dedicated working group on child guarantee, including civil society, has been updated. TSI project on monitoring and evaluation of ECG has been launched.

**Mr Oscar HERMUND OLSEN** mentioned a new law passed in June in **Denmark**, which ensures the rights of children, in particular those in vulnerable situations.

**Ms Isabelle GHOBIL-THIENEMANN** said that on 5 of July the **German** federal government approved the national action plan on ECG with over 350 existing or planned measures. There are 3 priorities: coordination on the various levels (DE chose to put ECG coordination at political level with appointment of parliamentary state secretary and national coordinator), cooperation with civil society (a national coordination meeting on ECG measures and best practices is planned for 27 September, the group will meet every 6 months and will have working sub-groups) and participation of children (concept on youth and children participation finalised in September). The implementation report will be presented at the end of 2024.

**Ms Helen JÕKS** said that **Estonia** is in the process of modernising the survivors' pensions in order to support children with one parent. From January 2024 the Government will provide financial support for those children whose parents fail to pay alimonies. Compulsory schooling has been extended until the age of 18 years, effective for children who will graduate in 2025. Child protection reform has been initiated.

**Mr Bryan PATTEN**, **Ireland** announced that his role would be taken over by **Ms Liz DORNAN**. Work has been on-going on policy framework for children and young people in place for 2023-2028, which will go for government's approval. This will focus on child poverty, mental health, and disability. A TSI project is ongoing with OECD on implementation and monitoring frameworks. The Taoiseach created a child poverty office, it is launching a 2,5 year programme set to address topics such as low income, early learning and care, costs of education, family homelessness, access to services, arts & culture & sports opportunities.

**Ms Maria DOUKAKOU**, **Greece** informed about progress of monitoring. Every three months information is collected from responsible ministries. An IT system on collecting evidence on ongoing measures with a breakdown on regional and local level is under preparation. The representatives of regional and local level will meet and coordinate implementation of the action plan. Due to recent floods, the meeting will also focus on support to affected families.

**Ms Lucia LOSOVIZ ADANI** explained **Spain's** work on reinforcing governance system. Works are on-going on a monitoring tool, matrix of indicators and mapping on on-going measures and funding (national and EU) on measures related to child poverty.

**Mr Alexis RINCKENBACH** explained the priorities of the action plan in **France**.

**Ms Tatjana KATKIC STANIC** mentioned the official adoption of the full **Croatian** action plan on 27 July. A Committee for coordination of the actions under Child Guarantee is being established with representatives from different ministries and experts from interest groups and local governments which will be called when necessary. The committee will work on the governance, implementation and monitoring system.

**Ms Cristina CALVINELLI** informed that there is a governmental programme in **Italy** for inclusion and fight against poverty with a budget of over 4 million EUR co-financed by ESF+ and other EU funds. Interventions relate among others to access to services, including school participation and training; social integration of minors from poor backgrounds. National guidelines on intervention with children and families in vulnerable situations are being implemented. To combat poverty among young people there is a new active inclusion measure. There was also the meeting of the youth advisory board.

**Ms Maria YIANGOU** introduced herself as the new Child Guarantee Coordinator in **Cyprus**. Discussions are on-going with national statistics office on including new data sets. An update of the plan is scheduled for 2024.

**Ms Kristina STEPANOVA** stated that in **Lithuania** works started on development of new services for children with disabilities. Public consultations are on-going on this to ensure the correct investments. Strengthening of the care systems in view of reducing number of children in institutions is another measure. There is a child version of the action plan and consultations with children will take place to collect their feedback on the planned actions. Monitoring of Child Guarantee was included in the agenda of the Social affairs and labour parliamentary committee. The parliament will track how the plan is implemented, with first meeting planned for October.

**Ms Annick SPAUTZ** mentioned on-going TSI on implementation of child guarantee in **Luxembourg** (based on two pillars: monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholders and children participation). Technical meetings on participation and indicators on-going.

**Ms Judit REZMOVES** provided information on setting up of an expert group on changes originating from eligibility to regular child protection support in **Hungary**, elaborating comprehensive system of criteria to help reach target groups with the measures, works on the monitoring framework are on-going. Memorandum of understanding for cooperation with UNICEF was signed in September to work on education, child protection, fighting against illicit trafficking and health with focus on women and children, mainly from Ukraine. HU is also involved in Council of Europe activities to support Ukrainian refugee children.

**Mr Christopher SINGHUBER** informed that **Austria** aims to combat child poverty through well targeted anti-inflation packages. Social benefits (including family benefits) have been adapted in 2023 in line with inflation rate, permanent increase of certain benefits for families. Action plan has been ready since 2022, however, it has not yet been adopted. Political negotiations are on-going. While most of the action plan has been approved, only few elements to agree on are left, and the process will finalise in autumn.

**Mr Wojciech KURASZYK** said that implementation in **Poland** is on-going through several ministries. Progress has been achieved in the areas of eradication of poverty among families with children, foster care, children with disabilities. Works on reporting have started.

**Ms Lia CAVALEIRO** explained that last year in **Portugal** an exceptional package of measures was launched to help families with rising prices, including extraordinary financial support (15 EUR per child/month for families with family allowance, and ca. 100 EUR per child/month for children in extreme poverty) reaching more than 140 thousand children. New programmes are being launched with ESF+ funding. Local child guarantee units were created in 33 communities, other 16 are on the way. TSI project to start on governance, monitoring and child participation.

**Ms Cristina CUCULAS** explained that the national plan in **Romania** is under approval of ministries, it will be validated together with the strategy on children's rights. Works are on-going on monitoring of measures and of the financing.

**Ms Mojca KAMBIČ** informed about support to families affected by the floods in **Slovenia**. In terms of the action plan, work is being finalised on the indicators, a meeting with civil society will take place on this issue. Most measures are on-going, an interesting project co-financed from EU funds relates to strengthening of parental skills.

**Ms Natália GYURKOVICS** explained that child participation meetings are planned in autumn across **Slovakia** to discuss with children topics related to Child Guarantee. She mentioned also targeted measures on menstrual poverty.

**Ms Emmi PAKKALA** announced the change of the child guarantee team in **Finland**, aftermath of the parliamentary election. The new government has announced some austerity measures which can have an impact on child poverty figures.

#### **IV. Preparing reports on the progress in ECG implementation**

**Mr Stefan ISZKOWSKI, DG EMPL** presented an annotated outline of a sample report to be used by the Member States in their reporting on the implementation of measures in the context of the Child Guarantee. Comments in writing are welcome until 6 October.



Draft outline for the  
2024 reports v2.pdf

Comments and questions from the Member States concerned:

- The need for Commission observations on the action plan (and response to it) to feed into the implementation report (PT);
- Clarification of the purpose of the implementation reports – whether they will be published, and how will they feed into the Commission report to the Council in 2026 (FR);
- The need to allow for reporting of qualitative, and not only quantitative measures (e.g. as regards developing legislation, establishing coordination mechanism, etc.; BG);
- The initial state of the implementation of the planned measures, what implies that reporting can be done on a general level, without exact quantifiable data (HU);
- The need to adapt the report to multilevel governance (BE);
- The tight timeframe, given that much data can be still unavailable and that translation of the implementation reports into English can take time.

In response to the above, Commission explained that the reports should reflect the real state of play, meaning that they can remain brief if the measures remain at an early stage of implementation. The deadline for reporting is set out in the Recommendation. Reports will be published at the child guarantee website next to the action plans. The Commission would welcome if the Reports are submitted also in English to foster mutual learning. In case of submission in the national languages only, the Commission can use its resources to prepare translations into English. The Coordinators were asked to provide more detailed comments to the annotated outline in writing before 6 October.

## **V. Child Poverty Project - preliminary results**

**Ms Kateryna BORNUKOVA** from Joint Research Centre summarized the results of a research project analysing the impact of child benefits on poverty reduction across the EU. The project shows, among others, that more than 60% of the total child cash support is received by non-poor households. Where the support is targeted at impoverished families, for many of them it is not enough to surpass the poverty line.



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## **VI. Update on situation of children fleeing war**

**Ms Monica GUTIERREZ ARQUES** from Fundamental Rights Agency made a presentation on recent findings on protection of children rights and their access to social rights in relation to UA refugee children.



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## **VII. Evaluating the Phase III of preparatory action for Child Guarantee**

**Ms Ananda MILLARD** from Policy Research Institute presented the results of their independent evaluation of Phase III of the preparatory action for European Child Guarantee, which ended in April 2023 indicating a number of good practices in implementation of the Child Guarantee.



Unicef Power point

\_summary presentation

## **VIII. Conclusions**

**Mr Olivier BONTOUT** (Deputy Head of Unit EMPL.D1) underlined the different positive developments in the Member States in terms of child guarantee implementation. He also reminded the Member States to submit any comments to the annotated outline of a sample report within the next two weeks. The next meeting of Coordinators will take place under the Spanish Presidency in Valencia on 3 November.